

ACT I] BEING EARNEST
365

marry often, nothing that she can possibly do
can alter my
eternal devotion to you.

Jack. Dear Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. The story of your romantic origin, as
related to me
by mamma, with unpleasing comments,, has
naturally stirred
the deeper fibres of my nature. Your
Christian name has
an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of
your character
makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me.
Your town
'address at the Albany I have. What is
your address in
the country?

Jack. The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.
*[Algernon, who has been carefully listening,
smites to himself
and writes the address on his shirtcuff.
Then picks up
the Railway Guide.]*

Gwendolen. There is a good postal service,, I
suppose? It may
be necessary to do something desperate. That of
course will
require serious consideration. I will
communicate with you
daily.

Jack. My own one I

Gwendolen. How long do you remain in town?

Jack. Till Monday.

Gwendolen. Good! Algy, you may turn round
now.

Algernon. Thanks, I've turned round already.

Gwendolen. You may also ring the bell.

Jack. You will let me see you to your carriage, my
own darling?

Gwendolen. Certainly.

Jack. *[To Lane, who now enters ^ I will see Miss
Fairfax out.]*

Lane. Yes, sir. *{Jack and Gwendolen
go off.*

[Lane presents several letters on a salver to

*Algernon. It is to
be surmised that they are bills, as Algernon ^ after
looking
at the envelopes, tears them up.]*

Algenum. A glass of sherry, Lane.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. I shall probably not be back till
Monday. You can
put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket,
and all the
Bunbury suits . . .

Lane. Yes, sir. *[Handing
sherry]*

Algernon. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day,

Lane.

Lane. It never is, sir.

Algernon. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

Lane. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.